

Message on the Observance of Hanukkah 2003

December 19, 2003

I send greetings to all those celebrating Hanukkah, the festival of lights.

During Hanukkah, people of the Jewish faith around the world mark the triumph of Jews against tyranny and oppression more than two millennia ago. With courage and unfailing faith, the Maccabees secured the Jewish people's freedom and reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. As they prepared to rededicate the Temple, there was only enough oil for one day, but the light continued to burn for eight days. Today, the lighting of the Menorah represents this ancient miracle and brings a message of hope and freedom to the Jewish people.

As families and friends share in the joyous traditions of Hanukkah, we recognize the power of faith to accomplish miracles and bring light from the darkness. We join in giving thanks for the blessings God has granted to our Nation. May the joy of Hanukkah and the peace and goodwill of the season fill our hearts and inspire us to lead lives of compassion.

Laura joins me in wishing you a blessed and Happy Hanukkah.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Message on the Observance of Christmas 2003

December 19, 2003

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2:14

As families and friends gather to celebrate Christmas, we remember all the blessings that fill our lives, beginning with the great blessing that came on a holy night in Bethlehem. For Christians around the world, the birth of Jesus is a central religious event; an example of God's profound love for humanity; and the pathway to hope and to new life.

Today, the Christmas story still speaks to every generation.

This holiday season, as we share in the spirit of giving and enjoy familiar Christmas traditions, we give thanks for the wonder of God's love and rededicate ourselves to helping those in need. We also pray for our brave men and women in uniform, many of whom will spend the holidays far from home. Their courage and dedication is helping keep us safe and extending freedom and peace. We are grateful for their service to our country, and for the support and sacrifice of their families.

Laura joins me in wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the peace and goodwill of the season fill every heart and warm every home.

George W. Bush

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Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa 2003

December 19, 2003

I send greetings to those observing Kwanzaa.

Celebrated by millions across the world, Kwanzaa honors the history and heritage of Africa. This seven-day observance is an opportunity for individuals of African descent to remember the sacrifices of their ancestors and reflect on the *Nguzo Saba*. Kwanzaa's seven social and spiritual principles offer strength and guidance to meet the challenges of each new day.

During this joyous time of year, Americans renew our commitment to hope, understanding, and the great promise of our Nation. In honoring the traditions of Africa, Kwanzaa strengthens the ties that bind individuals in communities across our country and around the world.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a joyous Kwanzaa.

George W. Bush

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Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 13

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in a telephone conversation with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, the President received notice of the possible capture of former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq by U.S. military personnel in Tikrit, Iraq. Later, he had another telephone conversation with Secretary Rumsfeld to discuss further information on the possible capture. He then had separate telephone conversations with Vice President Dick Cheney and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice to notify them of the possible capture.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

December 14

In the morning, in a telephone conversation with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, the President received confirmation of the capture of former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. He then had separate telephone conversations with Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, and Central Intelligence Agency Director George J. Tenet to inform them of the capture. The President and Mrs. Bush also watched television coverage of the briefing in Baghdad by L. Paul Bremer III, Presidential Envoy to Iraq, announcing the capture.

Later in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Adnan Pachachi, Acting President of the Governing Council of Iraq, to express his congratulations. He also had separate telephone conversations with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; and President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain to

discuss the capture. Also in the morning, the President had a briefing on details of the capture.

In the evening, at the National Building Museum, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in the taping of the annual "Christmas in Washington" concert for later television broadcast.

December 15

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada to discuss Canada-U.S. relations. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President met with Iraqi Minister of Health Khadir Abbas; Rend Rahim Francke, Head of the Iraq Interests Section in the U.S.; and a group of Iraqi doctors to discuss health care in Iraq.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the funeral of former President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan: Brent Scowcroft (head of delegation), Sam Brownback, A. Elizabeth Jones, and Reno L. Harnish.

December 16

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan to discuss the completion of the Afghan national highway from Kabul to Kandahar and other developments in Afghanistan. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a photo opportunity for the Pediatric Equity Research Act of 2003 and a signing ceremony for the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003. Later, he participated in an interview with Diane Sawyer of ABC News.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in separate signing ceremonies for the National Museum of African American History and Culture Act and the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003. He then participated in separate photo opportunities for the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act and the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act of 2003.